



SITTERSON
CANNON
ASTONE
ESPOSITO

FREE PLANET NIGHT

EXPANSION
PROTOCOLS
PART 2 OF 2



Humanity has fulfilled its destiny, spreading out across the stars, but the human diaspora has long since grown estranged.

Landing upon alien, uncharted worlds, humanity rediscovered itself, evolving into new societies, civilizations, and even species. Among these, the meritocratic autocracy of the Orouran Empire, with its all-knowing god emperor, the Great Sun, and the unceasing crusade to spread his light across the universe.

CREATED BY
AUBREY SITTERSON
WRITER
JED DOUGHERTY
ARTIST

GUEST ARTIST
TYRELL CANNON

COLORIST
VITTORIO ASTONE

LETTERER
TAYLOR ESPOSITO

DESIGNER
MARK KAUFMAN

COVER A
JED DOUGHERTY

COVER B
TYRELL CANNON

PRODUCTION/DESIGNER
DREW GILL

FREE PLANET

IMAGE COMICS INC.

Robert Kirkman: Chief Operations Officer
Erik Larsen: Chief Financial Officer
Todd McFarlane: President
Marc Silvestri: Chief Executive Officer
Jim Valentino: Vice President
Eric Stephenson: Publisher & Chief Creative Officer

IMAGECOMICS.COM



FREE PLANET #8. Digital edition. January 2026.
Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: PO BOX 14457, Portland, OR 97293. Copyright © 2026 Aubrey Sitterson & Jed Dougherty. All rights reserved. "Free Planet," its logos, and the likenesses of all characters herein are trademarks of Aubrey Sitterson & Jed Dougherty, unless otherwise noted. "Image" and the Image Comics logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. Image logo designed by Rob Liefeld. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for journalistic or review purposes), without the express written permission of Aubrey Sitterson & Jed Dougherty, or Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events, and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, or places, without satirical intent, is coincidental. For international rights, contact: foreignlicensing@imagecomics.com.

NET

The Interplanetary Development Alliance, in perpetual need of both workers to produce goods and markets in which to sell them, typically developed its universal expansion around the accession of planets already successfully inhabited by humanity.

By way of contrast, the Orouran approach was markedly less discerning, proceeding irrespective of human presence; the Empire's primary objectives comprised the extraction of exploitable resources and the settlement of its teeming population.

Upon discovery of a habitable planet, the Empire deployed its Apostles, elite special forces personnel tasked with reconnaissance and advance operations.

APOSTLE
NIKETAS:
AWAKEN!

GUH--!

LALOUX MISSION
APOSTLE #78-734022
NIKETAS
DAY 001

CONGRATULATIONS
ON YOUR FIRST
MISSION.

An Apostle was always aided by their Witness, in-orbit support personnel providing guidance via cerebral implant.

WHEN
THE GREAT
SUN CALLS, IT IS
OURS BUT TO
ANSWER.

No expense is spared on the Apostle's Glaive; diamond-like carbon coating provides enhanced durability and resistance to its high-carbon stainless steel head.

At seven years of age, the most independent and capable Orouans are selected, given wide-ranging training and permitted to wear the Apostolic Escutcheon.

Sign of office, reliable melee weapon and, most importantly, telemetry unit, providing a continuous feed of planet-side data to the Apostle's in-orbit Witness.

MY NAME IS LAINA; I AM YOUR WITNESS. TO SPEAK WITH ME, SIMPLY THINK IT.

I REMEMBER MY TRAINING. THANK YOU, WITNESS LAINA.

NO. THANK YOU. YOU HAVE SACRIFICED SO MUCH, WORKED SO HARD, FOR SO LONG...

IT IS AN HONOR TO SERVE YOU, APOSTLE NIKETAS.

THE HONOR IS MINE. TO SHINE THE GREAT SUN'S LIGHT UPON A NEW WORLD IS A PRIVILEGE BEYOND WORDS.

AND YET YOU PHRASE IT SO ELEGANTLY.

YOUR GLAIVE HAS BEEN CALIBRATED; WOULD YOU LIKE A MOMENT TO REFLECT? TO TAKE IN LALOUX?



NO. I AM HERE TO EVANGELIZE.



APOSTLE STANDARD ISSUE KIT

The loadout of Apostles is otherwise identical to marines more broadly; it is the Orouan inside the armor and wielding the submachine gun that makes the difference.

The workhouse IMC-57--like all Orouan weaponry--utilizes metal composite rounds; Apostles are deployed with a single additional magazine.

Specially ported muzzle brakes, in concert with Orouan heft and the strength and stability benefits of Orouan armor, allow the IMC-57 to be fired one-handed.

THE
TRANSFER
IS COMPLETE,
APOSTLE NIKETAS;
YOU'RE CLEAR TO
MOVE TO THE NEXT
CHECKPOINT.

IN
TIME.

THE EMPIRE
NEEDS HOMES,
RAW MATERIALS,
PEACE.

THIS WORLD
MUST BE MADE
SAFE FOR THE
GREAT SUN'S
CHILDREN.

I AM IN
AWE OF YOUR
DEDICATION. YOU DO
HAVE TWO IMC-57
MAGAZINES,
AFTER ALL.

THEY MUST
LAST UNTIL THIS
PLANET IS READY FOR
COLONIZATION,
WITNESS LAINA.

IT'S
CLEAR TO ME
WHY YOU WERE
CHOSEN.

THE ARTHROS'
BEHAVIOR INDICATES
A BIOLOGICAL CASTE
SYSTEM.

THEY
WILL CONTINUE
ATTACKING
UNTIL IT IS
DISMANTLED.

THEN
I SHALL
FIND THEIR
LEADER...

...AND
RENDER
UNTO IT THE
GREAT SUN'S
JUSTICE.

MAY IT
BE, APOSTLE
NIKETAS.



STHUNK

LALOUX MISSION
APOSTLE #7B-734022
NIKETAS
DAY 006

YOU MUST
BE STARVING...I
REMAIN ASTOUNDED
BY YOUR
FORTITUDE.

NOT
FORTITUDE,
WITNESS
LAINA.
FAITH.

I CONSERVE MY
RATIONS, CONFIDENT
THAT THE GREAT SUN
WILL PROVIDE.

STHUNK

THE
FOLLOWING
APPEAR HIGHLY
REGENERABLE:
VINES, ROOTS, FLOWER
STALKS, TRAPS AND
CONSTITUENT
COMPONENTS.

Crown

Lobe

Cilia

Trigger hairs

Flower stalk

Hinge

EVEN WITH
LINGERING METABOLIC
SLOWDOWN AND YOUR
ARMOR'S CALORIC DRIP,
I GROW CONCERNED
ABOUT YOUR ENERGY
EXPENDITURE, APOSTLE
NIKETAS.

"THROUGH OUR
SACRIFICE, HIS
RULE ENDURES."

MAY IT
BE, APOSTLE
NIKETAS. I AM
AMAZED BY YOUR
WISDOM TWICE
OVER.

DESTROYING
THE CROWN
WILL SUCCESSFULLY
INHIBIT ADDITIONAL
GROWTH.

THE GREAT SUN ALWAYS
PROVIDES. WOULD HE SEND
HIS CHILDREN WHERE THERE
WAS NO SUSTENANCE?

OF COURSE
NOT. HOWEVER,
I DON'T HAVE
SUFFICIENT DATA
TO ASSESS
TOXICITY
LEVELS.

FRET
NOT, WITNESS
LAINA.



THE GREAT
SUN FREES US
FROM WORRY.

YOU'VE BEEN
EXPOSED TO A
NEUROTOXIN.

APOSTLE
NIKETAS, CAN
YOU READ ME?

...NIKO...

This is why you **WORK**.
Why you **suffer**.
Why you **FIGHT**.
To work and to suffer, to fight and to **KILL**,
over and **OVER**
AGAIN.

SHHHH,
NIKO. THIS IS
OUR PURPOSE. TO
PREPARE YOU FOR
THIS GREAT
HONOR.

YOU'RE
GOING TO
MAKE US ALL
SO VERY PROUD,
MY STRONG,
BRAVE BOY.

WITH YOUR
METABOLISM, A
SINGLE INVIGORANT
SHOULD BE ALL
YOU NEED.

You had **EVERYTHING**.

The possibility of everything.

But you wanted **MORE**.

They promised more
and you **ACCEPTED** it:

The void and **EVERYTHING** in it.
dark and **EMPTY**
forever and **EVER**.

NIKETAS...
WILL YOU
SERVE AS MY
APOSTLE?

I HAVE FAITH
THAT A SINGLE
RATION WILL BE
SUFFICIENT.

THE
GREAT SUN
CHOSE YOU. FOR
THE STRENGTH
YOU MUST
MAINTAIN.

THE
FEVER IS YOUR
BODY PREVAILING;
ITS HEAT BANISHES
THE DARKNESS.

FAITH
YOU TAUGHT
ME, APOSTLE
NIKETAS.

MAY
I NEVER
FAIL YOU.

The void and what **FILLS** it:
Blood and screams
Metal on **FLESH**
Fight and struggle and **DIE**.
MORE. I want, I need, I demand more.
It's **NOT** enough.
There's not **ENOUGH**.

IT HAS
BEEN DAYS SINCE
FIRST CONTACT WITH
NO OBSERVABLE
PROGRESS.

THESE
ARE HUMANS,
WITNESS
LAINA.

THEIR
DEVELOPMENT
RATING INDICATES
OTHERWISE.

I AM HERE TO
EVANGELIZE. TO
SHINE HIS LIGHT
IN THE DARKNESS.
BUT THIS...

THE
UNIVERSE IS
NOT SIMPLE, APOSTLE
NIKETAS. IT'S SO
VERY EASY TO
GET LOST.

ALLOW THE
GREAT SUN'S
LIGHT TO
GUIDE YOU.

IT
BURNS AWAY
COMPLICATIONS,
LEAVING ONLY
TRUTH AND
NECESSITY.

Lacking language
capabilities and
superior eyesight,
hallmarks of human
development.

Significant mutations
and drastic deviations
from mainline humanity.

Sexual monomorphism;
genetic intermingling
exceedingly unlikely.

No visible clothing,
tools, crafts or
cultural elements;
complete devolution.

THESE
BEASTS WILL KILL
YOU. WHAT WOULD
BECOME OF THOSE
WITHOUT YOUR
TALENTS?

THIS WORLD
MUST BE MADE SAFE
FOR THE GREAT SUN'S
CHILDREN, APOSTLE
NIKETAS.

IF THE
TASK WERE AN
EASY ONE, HE
WOULD NOT HAVE
SENT YOU.

FREE
YOURSELF
FROM WORRY.
FIND PEACE IN
HIS WISDOM
AND VISION.

REMEMBER
THE PSALM
TO GLORY!

WE
SHALL DEFEY
EVERY FOE.

WE...
WE SHALL
DEFEY EVERY
FOE.

WE SHALL
SUFFER EVERY
HORROR.

WE SHALL
SUFFER.

EVERY.

HORROR.

THIS IS ALL
THERE IS. AND
ALL I SHALL EVER
BECOME.

RUINS AND
DEATH AND
SILENCE AND
DUST.

APOSTLE
NIKETAS, I
UNDERSTAND--

NO. YOU
DO NOT.

STRUGGLE
AND STRIVE, OVER
AND OVER, AGAIN AND
AGAIN, FOREVER
AND EVER, WITH NO
REWARD BUT
THE END.

ALL THAT
REMAINS IS TO
TAKE SATISFACTION,
TO TAKE WHAT LITTLE
PLEASURE I CAN
IN THIS SAVAGE
WORLD.

PLEASURES ARE
FLEETING, APOSTLE
NIKETAS; TRUE JOY
COMES ONLY FROM
PURPOSE.

This is the Great
Sun's GIFT to us:
A shared purpose,
DIVINE and
unending,
just and righteous.
A mission, a calling,
EXALTING us above
this sordid realm
of corrupted flesh,
of COMPROMISED
choices.

This MISSION, my suffering,
it does not exalt;
it DEBASES
and destroys.
I have fought
and suffered,
fallen and risen again,
but for WHAT?
Grace is beyond
my reach;
I see NO LIGHT.

MY HEART
WEEPS FOR YOU,
APOSTLE NIKETAS, FOR
YOUR TRIALS IN THE
DARKNESS, FAR FROM
THE GREAT SUN'S
LIGHT.

THE UNIVERSE
IS CRUEL AND
DANGEROUS, VICIOUS
AND UNPREDICTABLE;
NO ONE ESCAPES
IT ALIVE.

BUT AMID
THE CONFUSION
THERE IS
YET PEACE. THERE IS
FREEDOM IN PURPOSE,
IN OBEDIENCE.

I AM
SORRY, APOSTLE
NO TIME
FOR DISCUSSION OR
FOR DISCUSSION OR
FOR DISCUSSION

I'VE IDENTIFIED A
FAST-APPROACHING
VORTEX COMPLEX. I
LOSE CONTACT FOR
THE DURATION.

STEEL YOURSELF
SUN'S
LIGHT SHINES UPON US
ALL, BUT FACE THE DARKNESS
ALONE.

APOSTLE
NIKETAS.

MAY IT
BE, WITNESS
LAINA.

I KNEW
PURPOSE.

I WOULD
ENDURE ANYTHING
TO BE REWARDED
WITH GREATNESS.

KRAK

THOK

THEY
BROUGHT ME
NOTHING. I HAVE
ACCOMPLISHED
NOTHING. I HAVE
NOTHING.

AND
WORST
OF ALL?

THERE'S NO
GREATNESS, MY
FREEDOM. I HAVE
NO FUTURE.

I WAS
A FOOL.

I RENOUNCED
HAPPINESS,
SATISFACTION,
EVERYTHING.

I'VE
SHACKLED
MYSELF TO
A POINTLESS
MISSION AND
A WASTED
LIFE.

THERE'S
NOTHING LEFT
FOR ME BUT
TO FORGE
AHEAD...

MY
OBEDIENCE,
THE SUFFERING, EVERY
THE VOICE, EVERY
CHOICE, EVERY
SACRIFICE.

NIKO...

I TOOK
SOLACE IN MY
MISSION, MY
DESTINY.

IT WAS
A LIE.

...INTO THE
DARKNESS.

LALOUX MISSION
APOSTLE #78-734022
NIKETAS
DAY 014

THEIR
HUMANITY
CANNOT YET
BE RULED
OUT...

SO I
SHOULD ALLOW
THEM TO DEVOUR ME?
THEY'RE MONSTERS,
WITNESS LAINA.

PLEASE,
APOSTLE NIKETAS:
REMEMBER YOUR
MISSION.

WHILE
THEY APPEAR
THAT WAY, THEY
EXHIBIT INDICATORS
OF GENERATIVE
LANGUAGE.

HOLD
FOR FULL
ANALYSIS
AND WE CAN
ATTEMPT--



THERE'S
NO LIGHT HERE,
WITNESS LAINA.

THERE IS ONLY
DARKNESS...

NO...

THE GREAT
SUN'S LIGHT
SHALL SHINE
UPON ALL HIS
CHILDREN.



AND
DEATH.

NO--!



LAINA!

SNAPKT



YOU
HAVE TO MOVE.
QUICKLY. WITHOUT
ADDITIONAL
ROUNDS--



GRAAAAAAAAAAH!

KRRUGCHT

YOU
STILL HAVE
YOUR GLAIVE.
CAN YOU--

NO...CAN'T
MOVE...NNNGHT...
ANYTHING...





APOSTLE
NIKETAS, DO YOU
KNOW WHERE IT'S
TAKING YOU?

HOME...

A...A
CARETAKER...

THEY...
ALWAYS
CALLED ME
NIKO...

I...I WAS...
HAPPY...?

BEFORE
THIS...MEANINGLESS
LIFE...ABANDONED
AND--

NO.
ALL LIFE IS
WITHOUT MEANING
EXCEPT FOR
THAT WHICH WE
GIVE IT.

AND YOU
ACCEPTED THE
GREATEST
CALLING,
BRAVELY.

REMEMBER
THE PSALM
TO GLORY.

OROURAN PSALM TO GLORY

Blessed be the Great Sun,
who binds us in discipline.
Blessed be the Great Sun,
who frees us from worry.
He trains our hands for war
and our fingers for battle.
He bestows purpose in chaos

and direction in the void.
Who else can endure the
throes of rulership?
Who else can relieve us
from the burden of existence?
Through his benevolence,
our freedom is assured.

Through our sacrifice,
his rule endures.
We shall defy every foe,
We shall suffer every horror,
For we do so in his
radiant light.

THROUGH
HIS BENEVOLENCE,
OUR FREEDOM IS
ASSURED.

THROUGH
OUR
SACRIFICE,
HIS RULE
ENDURES.

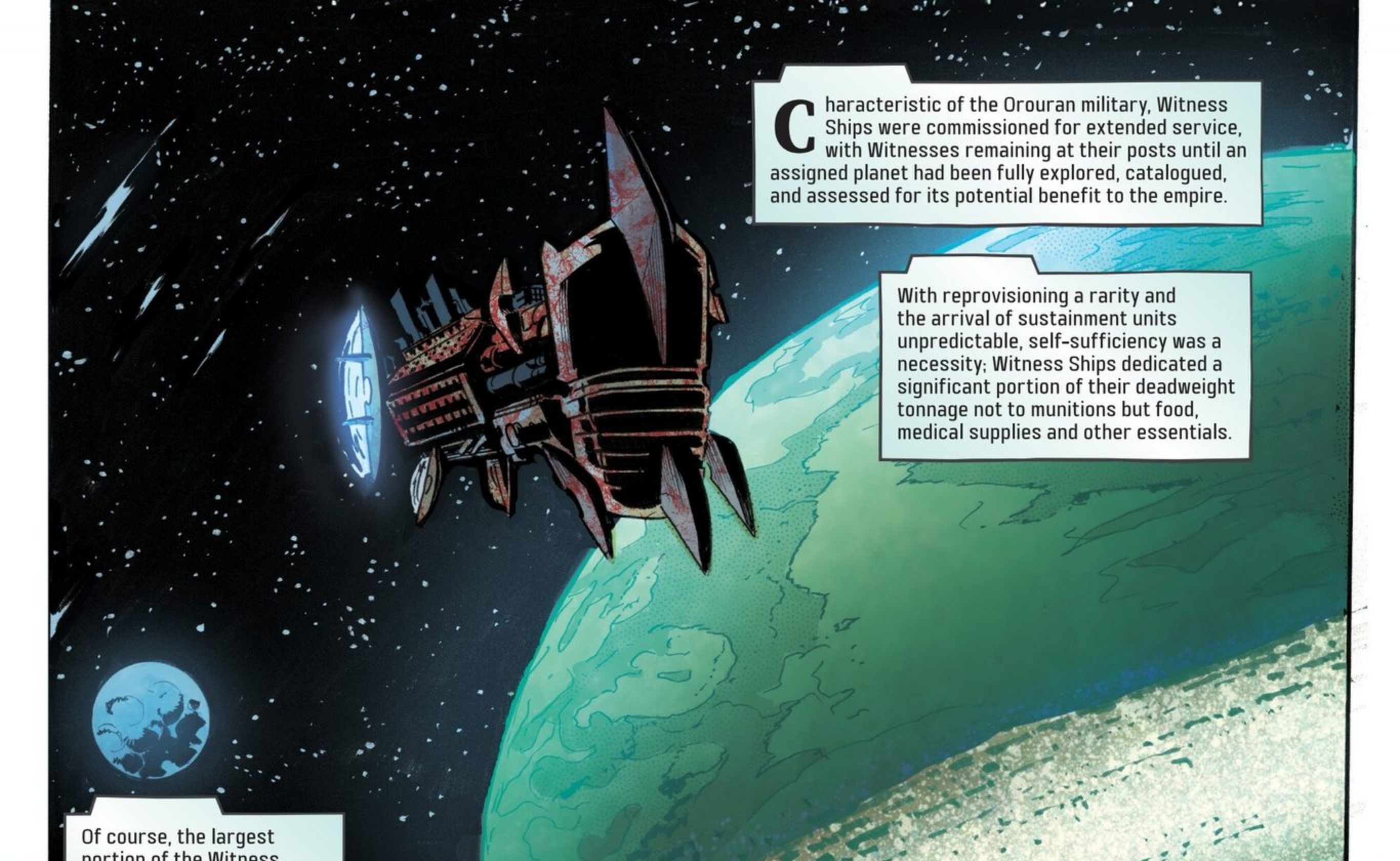
GYAAA...!

WE SHALL
DEFY EVERY
FOE.

WE SHALL
SUFFER EVERY
HORROR.

FOR
WE DO
SO IN HIS
RADIANT
LIGHT.

THE
GREAT SUN
THANKS YOU
FOR YOUR
SERVICE,
NIKO.



Characteristic of the Orouran military, Witness Ships were commissioned for extended service, with Witnesses remaining at their posts until an assigned planet had been fully explored, catalogued, and assessed for its potential benefit to the empire.

With reprovisioning a rarity and the arrival of sustainment units unpredictable, self-sufficiency was a necessity; Witness Ships dedicated a significant portion of their deadweight tonnage not to munitions but food, medical supplies and other essentials.

Of course, the largest portion of the Witness Ships' cargo comprised the Apostles themselves, their individual loadouts, and the single-occupancy, single-use dropships used to ferry them to a planet's surface, where they would live out the rest of their short lives.



This curious methodology was representative of Orouran priorities: While an individual life, even of a highly trained Apostle, was expendable, food and energy were precious. As such, Apostles were held in suspended animation until selected for deployment.



I'VE LOST ANOTHER ONE.

THE TROGLOBITES AGAIN.

While a Witness Ship's mission could be accomplished more quickly by deploying its full personnel load, bereft of any means to retrieve Apostles or otherwise transport them, this was deemed an unnecessary expenditure of resources that could be utilized elsewhere.

Thus, rather than releasing its full troop complement at once, Witness Ships, instead, partitioned a planet into zones of exploration assigned to single Witnesses, who, upon one Apostle's predictable demise, would deploy another, continuing exploration undeterred.

NNNT--!

APOSTLE
CADE:
AWAKEN!

LALOUX MISSION
APOSTLE #78-734023
CADE
DAY 001

CONGRATULATIONS
ON YOUR FIRST
MISSION.

THE GREAT
SUN CALLED
AND I HAVE
ANSWERED.

End.

A MERITOCRATIC AUTOCRACY: OROURAN FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

BY DR. ALDOUS FOYROUSHI

Though Orouran military personnel rarely allow themselves to be captured alive, higher-level personnel have demonstrated an eagerness to describe the meritocratic nature of the Empire's rigid hierarchy. Despite the immutability of the Orouran rangordnung, the Empire does not restrict access to its upper echelons based on formal castes, informal classes or even wealth and personal relationships. Rather, placement within the Orouran hierarchy – from manual laborer up to the Great Sun – is based solely on ability, aptitude, and drive.

Among the foremost tenets valued by Orourans are excellence and – perhaps shocking for a hierarchical autocracy – equality. To the Orouran mind, the two are intricately linked, with a culture-wide mandate to find not only the best citizen for every role but the best role for every citizen. This lofty goal necessitates a completely level playing field, with opportunities for every citizen to rise to the Empire's highest levels.

The Orouran commitment to equality is best and most shockingly demonstrated through the Empire's communal childrearing centers, which ensure that all children receive adequate food, care, encouragement and support, catered to their individual needs. Further, Orouran childrearing practices also ensure the equality of adult citizens, who are free to procreate without the obligations of childrearing, thereby avoiding a collective gene pool limited to those who are not only interested in childrearing but affluent enough to afford it.

From near infancy, Orourans are assessed and categorized. Receiving training based on traits mental, physical, and emotional, children are continually retested and even recategorized in order that they might all reach their full potential. At the age of eight, young Orourans are placed into educational tracks, with the most insightful and broadly intelligent – regardless of physical traits or abilities – selected for the Orouran Administrative Corps.

Though all roles within the Orouran hierarchy are culturally valued, the Administrative Corps track is the most celebrated, ending as it does with the Great Sun's throne. To staff this extensive bureaucratic apparatus, certain traits are sought, including a demonstrated proficiency with formal logic, robust cognitive retention, advanced pattern recognition faculties, and, crucially, exceptional forbearance. The Orouran Administrative Corps recruits across the Empire's entire footprint, with no preference given to ethnic Orourans or those living upon the capital planet.



Teenage students undergo extensive examinations on imperial Maezorin, prior to its reabsorption by the Alliance.

At the age of 14, Orourans training for the Administrative Corps take their first examination. Consisting of written portions as well as interviews and other tests, this assessment determines the specific field in which a citizen will continue their training. By the age of 18, trainees are considered ready for service, becoming eligible for placement examinations. These more specific and focused tests

are administered to every qualified citizen upon a role being made vacant by death, retirement or advancement.

By way of contrast, the exacting and grueling Imperial Examination – used to determine suitable candidates for the Great Sun’s throne – is administered annually. This regular cadence is maintained out of necessity vis-à-vis the Orouran Empire’s autocratic nature; the Great Sun serves a function far too critical to remain vacant for any length of time.

To be sure, the Great Sun’s duties are as vital as they are grueling. While the most granular tactical considerations are left to individual experts, the Great Sun makes broad strategic decisions in addition to providing operational and even tactical guidance. The Orouran autocrat accomplishes this monumental task through the acquisition and analysis of knowledge across all domains, including, but not limited to, the military, political, scientific, economic, anthropological, sociological, and religious. This constant assessment of overwhelming amounts of information comprises the Great Sun’s burden, extensive and expansive.

When a conclusion is reached, the Great Sun issues directives couched in complex decision trees entrusted to their most trusted high-level personnel, along with guidance on disclosure levels and escalation protocols. Though much of the Great Sun’s focus remains, of course, on matters military and administrative, they also exhibit strict control over alimentary concerns, industrial production and even sociological issues, such as those resulting from the incorporation of new planets.

The Great Sun’s decisions are based on data, metrics and reports from throughout the Empire’s vast footprint, assembled by those best suited for a given task. This information is fed directly into the supreme Orouran leader’s neural pathways through the Great Sun’s Helm, which also further amplifies its wearer’s already prodigious natural analytic capabilities.

The gleaming Helm, however, weighs heavily upon the head of the Great Sun. Imperial data analysis is a torturous process, intense and invasive, inclusive of not only the surgical adaptations required to utilize the Helm but the constant feed of information that precludes the possibility of sleep. For this reason, the Imperial Examination is designed to screen out candidates possessing neurological systems incompatible with the Helm as well as those lacking the role’s requisite fortitude.

This ongoing, agonizing process is endured in order that the Great Sun might always make the proper decisions holistically, in consideration of all available facts and context. Orourans view the Helm and its burden as not only enabling the Empire’s continued existence but as liberating Imperial citizens from any concerns beyond excelling in the role for which they are best suited. Thus, the Orouran hierarchy as a whole is seen not in opposition to but in support of equality and freedom, with the Great Sun’s absolute power leavened by the dramatic cost to the mind and body of the soul chosen and condemned to take up the Helm.



Deceased Orouran marines are frequently found with devotional cards depicting the Great Sun, with the Psalm to Glory printed on the verso.

SUBMIT QUESTIONS
regarding Lutheran history to
DrAldousFoyroushi@AtlantisStillSunk.com

NEXT ISSUE

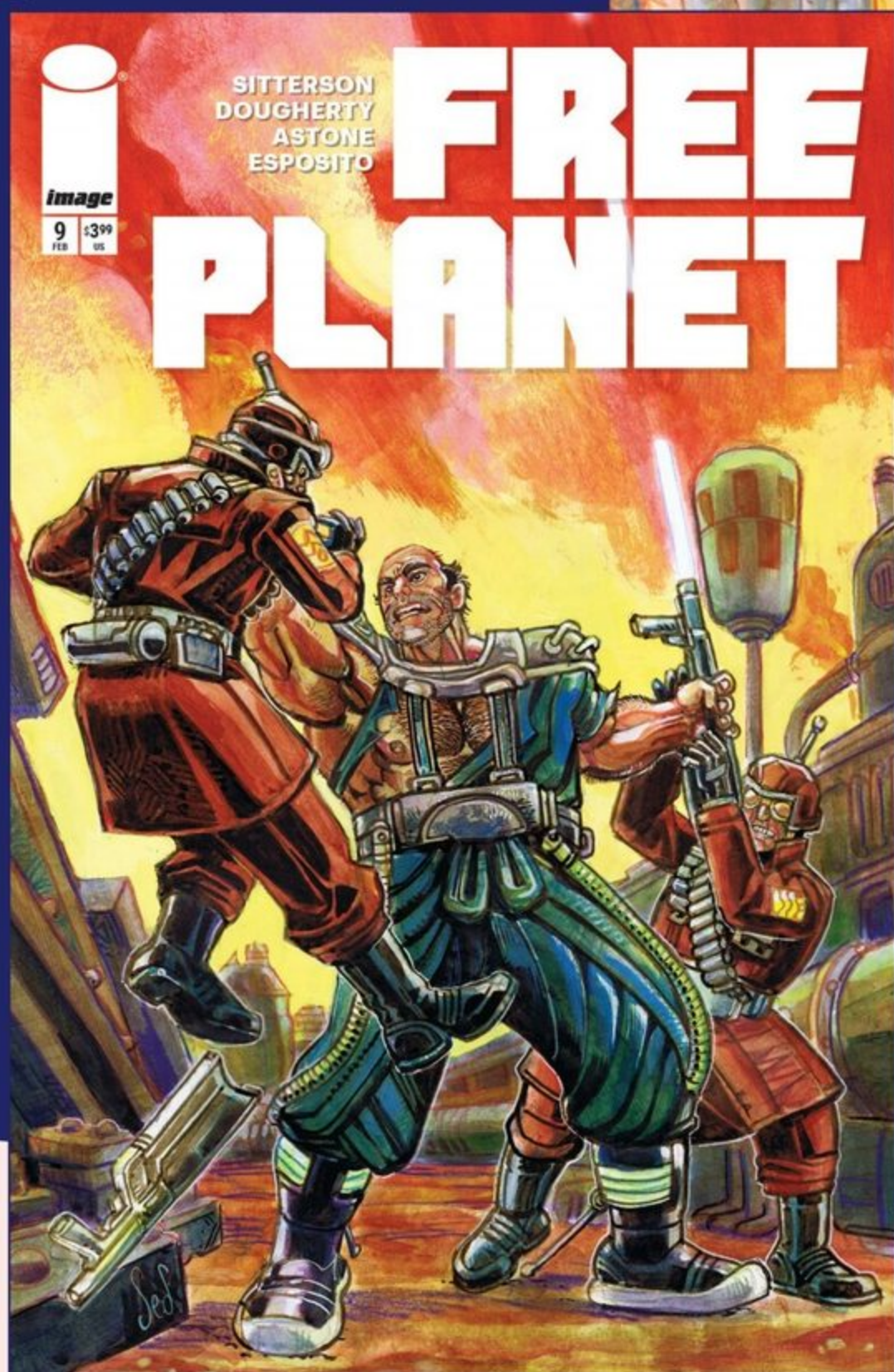
Cover A



SITTERSON
DOUGHERTY
ASTONE
ESPOSITO

FREE PLANET NET

**NEW STORY
ARC BEGINS
HERE!**



*What freedom did you fight
for? The freedom to struggle
and suffer? To starve?*

Cover B

A geopolitical
space opera by
AUBREY SITTERSON
and **JED DOUGHERTY**

FREE PLANET

**VOL
1**

"Brings shades of the
cosmic imagination of Jack
Vance, Jack Kirby, and
Samuel Delany and Howard
Chaykin's great lost *Empire*."

—**Jonathan Lethem**
(*The Fortress of Solitude*,
Motherless Brooklyn)

"Rich, intricate
worldbuilding that
is equal parts *Dune*,
Claremont and
Saga while being
wholly original."

—**Robert Kirkman**
(*Invincible*,
The Walking Dead)

"A great comic book series,
a synergy of text and image
possessed with a density of
vision that shames most any
other attempt at legitimate
space opera in comics."

—**Howard Chaykin**
(*American Flagg*, *Time²*)



IMAGECOMICS.COM
f x @ d t in
#IMAGECOMICS

Free Planet is™ & © 2025 Aubrey Sitterson & Jed
Dougherty. Image Comics® and its logos are registered
trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved.

AVAILABLE NOW

JANUARY AT IMAGE



Thirty years ago demons arrived on earth. We've learned to live with it, mostly. Now, we've got a weapon that can kill demons. And us, it seems. Our lead is definitely highly compelling trouble. Justin Jordan, John Bivens and Felipe Sobreiro, the team behind *Spread*, give us the first new comic of 2026. **Malevolent** is a driven mix of clean storytelling and dirty action. Start the year as you mean to go on – with extreme, joyous violence and coating the walls with demon ichor.



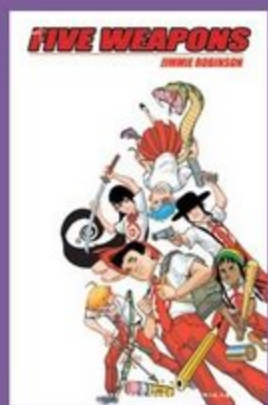
Charles Soule [*Eight Billion Genies*, *Undiscovered Country*] and Will Sliney [*Hell to Pay*, *Spider-Man*] return to their Shrouded College universe with the **The Cold Witch** trade collection. It's a good time to catch up with this – it's winter, a revenge thriller set in this supernatural cold-war universe. The eponymous Cold Witch vs an equally chilly woman looking for payback for her dead husband, with the College picking up the icy, bloody pieces.



Bug Wars' first mini was one of the pop-comic standouts of 2025, and Jason Aaron [*Thor*, *Southern Bastards*] and Mahmud Asrar [*Conan the Barbarian*, *X-Men*] have promised a real return to the Yard and the battling Mytes later in the year, but until then, here's the extra-large **Bug Wars: The Spyder Wytch Special** about the very special Spyder Wytches. It promises secrets of this most mysterious sect and arachnid hotties. Will this cure people's arachnophobia? Find out in January.

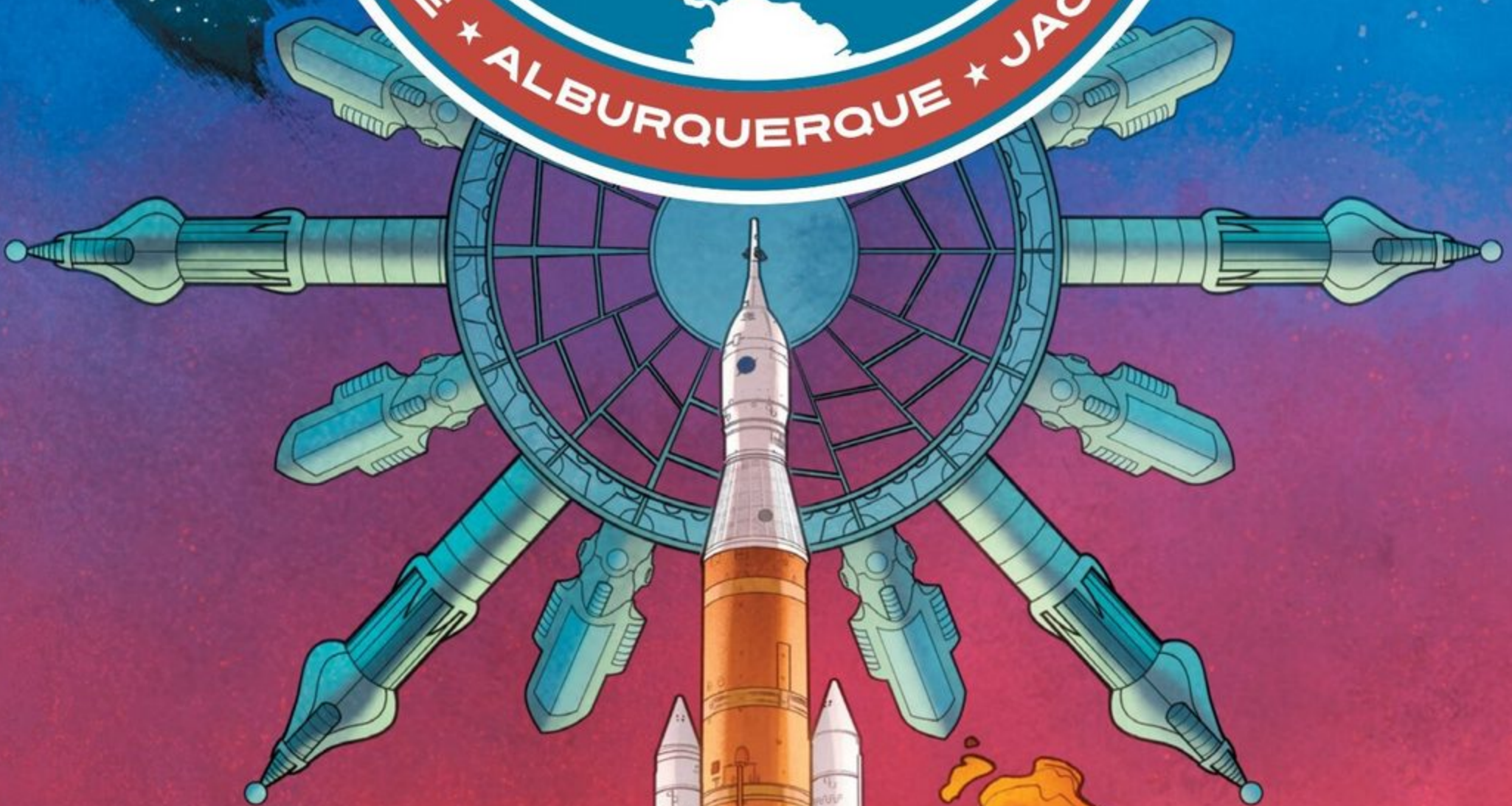


I've yet to read **Altamont**, as it's presently out in France and my French is limited to bad Batroc the Leaper impressions, but this semi-real, semi-fictional original graphic novel of the most infamous of music festivals is exactly the sort of thing which attracts my music-loving attention. From Herik Hanna and Charlie Adlard [*The Walking Dead*], arriving in a fine Image edition in January. Don't eat the brown acid, do take this down from the shelves and browse.



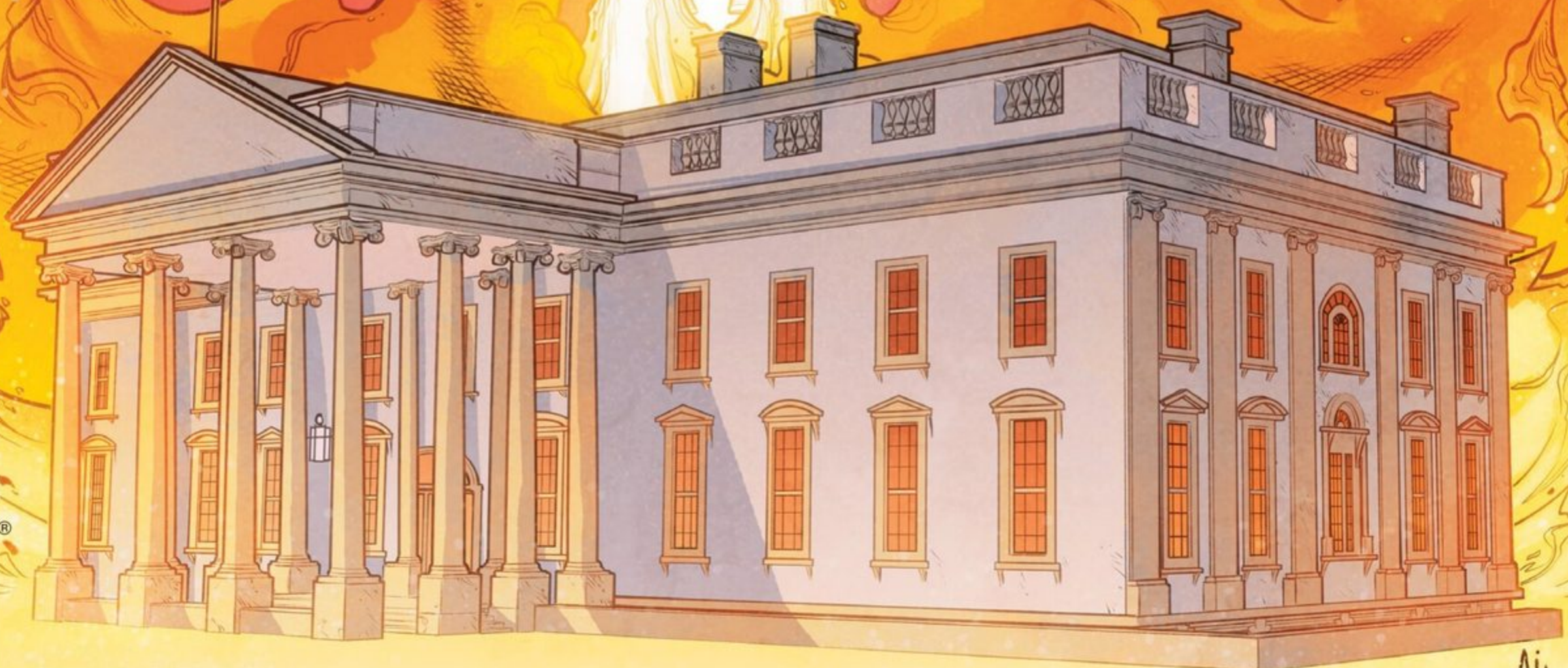
January is a traditionally quiet time for new releases, which makes it a good time to look back at Image's excellent back catalogue, especially when it's returned in a new, modern format. For example, **Five Weapons** by Jimmie Robinson [*Bomb Queen*], which follows the tribulations of a pacifist thirteen-year-old enrolled in an assassin school. Well, that sounds very tricky. Lucky he's smart, right? This new edition collects issues #1-10 in that oh-so-petite-and-popular 6" x 9" format.

Kieron Gillen writes **The Power Fantasy** and **DIE: Loaded**.



"A very plausible, well-researched scenario on how NASA—or an entity like it—might mount an extensive, high-stakes space exploration mission to save mankind."

**—Ed Stanton
NASA Orion Engineer
Kennedy Space Center**



LETTER 44 is TM & copyright © 2025 Charles Soule & Alberto Jimenez-Alburquerque. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved.



COMPENDIUM AVAILABLE NOW

AIA 24
Soule

THE MOON is FOLLOWING US™

DANIEL WARREN JOHNSON
RILEY ROSSMO
MIKE SPICER

"A great comic often has amazing art, stellar scripting, a unique premise, or a top notch creative team. THE MOON IS FOLLOWING US #1 has all of the above. It's two creators at the top of their games, delivering a story with human weight in a fantastic setting and delivering an ending that no one saw coming."

—Adventures in Poor Taste

**VOL. 1 TRADE PAPERBACK
AVAILABLE NOW**

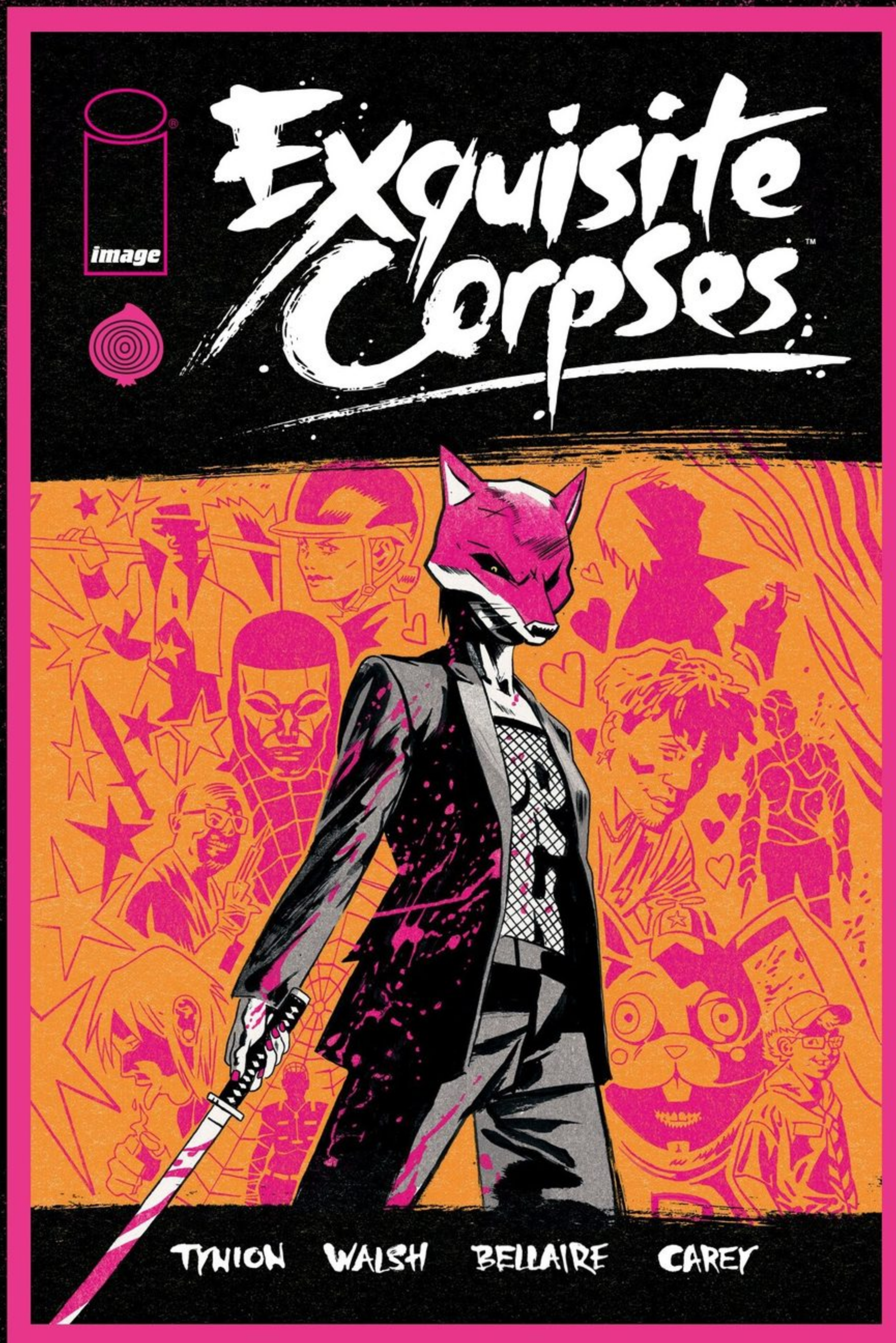
FOLLOW #IMAGECOMICS



IMAGECOMICS.COM

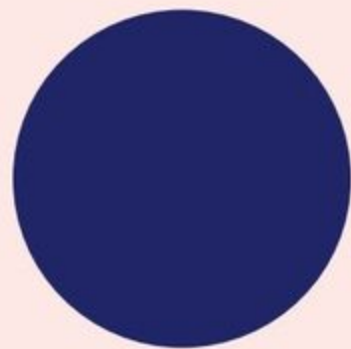
THE MOON IS FOLLOWING US is™ & © 2025 DANIEL WARREN JOHNSON & RILEY ROSSMO. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved.

THE HORROR EVENT
OF THE YEAR IS HERE.



"Lyrical in its brutality and mesmerizing in its chaos, Tiny Onion's EXQUISITE CORPSES transforms a quiet town into a stage for elegant carnage, as a wonderfully twisted menagerie of killers descends like a fever dream, blending Battle Royale with *The Silence of the Lambs*."

—GEOFF JOHNS (GEIGER, GREEN LANTERN)



“There is freedom in purpose,
in obedience.”

—*Witness Laina*

RATED **T+** (TEEN PLUS)

